'Right' Girl Has T[illegible] on So[illegible]

By HELEN DUDAR

NEW YORK (WNS)—Priscilla Johnson MacMillan is a tall, shapely woman with golden skin, a face Truman Capote once likened to a wild faun's, the small voice of a small girl and a startled, shy manner that suggests inbred vagueness.

To the casual eye, everything about he embodies the great American stereotype of the well born and barely-conscious flower of fine society—the Pilgrim ancestry, the line in the Social Register, the right suburb (Locust Valley, L.I.), the right sport (tennis), the right schools (Bearley, Bryn Mawr).

The first impressions are wildly misleading. That the daughter of a patrician stockbroker should be a student of Soviet affairs is one of those nice paradoxes we are rich in. That she should have been chosen to translate Svetlana Stalina's book is a measure of how well Patricia MacMillan, 38, has succeeded.

THE WHERE-AM-I expression she seems habitually to wear is a natural disguise for a fine mind and sensibility, as well as a stubborn talent for getting what she is professionally interested in having.

Martin Hayden, for example, now editor of the Detroit News, must be pleasantly surprised by Mrs. MacMillan's rise in the journalistic world. It was Hayden, then White House correspondent for the Detroit News and North American Newspaper Alliance, who in 1955 gave Priscilla her first newspaper experience, translating the proceedings at the Soviet briefings at the Geneva Big Four conference.

And John Osenenko, executive vice-president of NANA, is another intrigued observer of Mrs. MacMillan's recent fame. He recalls how in the fall of 1957 she went to Russia and, after much red tape with the Soviet Foreign Office, became accredited as NANA's Moscow correspondent.

"PRISCILLA WAS the kind of correspondent the Russians were wary of in those days," Osenenko said. "She knew too much about Soviet history, law and politics to be bamboozled by propaganda handouts from the Kremlin. And with her expert knowledge of the language she could fine-comb the Russian press for story leads."

She worked in Moscow for two years for the NANA news service. She was forced to leave after trying to cable a story on the future of Anastas Mikoyan. The censor blocked it and, even though the story never was published, the Foreign Ministry would not renew her accreditation. The late Adlai Stevenson was among several dignitaries who unsuccessfully [illegible] the

ple had talked to her candidly; she had been prudent about not using names, but she was well aware that the Russian police knew whom she had been seeing.

MRS. MacMILLAN was one of five Russian-speaking Soviet experts recommended to Harper & Row by former Ambassador George Kennan, who helped arrange Mme Stalina's trip here. Her selection means further delay in the Marina Oswald book, also to be published by Harper.

It is half-written, its completion delayed by two personal crises in 1966. She had a serious bout of pneumonia. After her recovery, her mother became gravely ill and died. The year ended on a happier note. Last Dec. 30, she married George MacMillan, a free-lance writer, a stocky, ebullient counterpoint to a quiet wife.

When news of Stalina's defection first broke, Mrs. MacMillan, along with her publisher and hundreds of other writers and publishers, began trying to reach her in hopes of proposing a book, unaware that one had already been written.

Then, Harper called her to New York from her Atlanta home without telling her the reason. Life has been chaotic ever since.

SHE SPENT three days in a little office, reading the manuscript Harper's had gotten, preparing a report on it, as well as a translation of a small segment. About two weeks ago, she flew to Switzerland for a brief conference with Mme Stalina. Someone will have to ask Mme Stalina what she thought of the translation. Modest by nature, Mrs. MacMillan told an

One of her two brothers, Stuart Johnson Jr., a Washington attorney, said the other day that all the Johnson children were encouraged to "independence of thought." Priscilla not only pursued the ideal but had positions about which to be independent.

In addition, "Priscilla got to be quite a good tennis player. I don't know how she does it. She's left-handed and suffers from acute astigmatism. But she's remarkably quick at the net and she won the Junior Whiteman Tennis Cup as a kid."

PRISCILLA ENTERED her teens impassioned by the ideals of world federalism as a way toward permanent peace. It led her to abandon an early ambition to become an archeologist and to [illegible] up a 4-year start on Greek for Russian.

At Bryn Mawr, under the tutelage of a Dutch teacher, she became the only native-born American who speaks Russian with a Dutch accent. She graduated cum laude and went on to Harvard where a classmate once remembered her as "a sort of genius."

Mrs. MacMillan has not been back in Russia since the 1962 trip and misses it. She has been living in Atlanta where her husband, a specialist in civil rights movement, has been teaching journalism at Atlanta University and developing a foundation project to train and bring more Negroes into newspaper work.

Atlanta has no snow and no fellow Kremlinologists to talk to. The last time she got both together was in 1965 when she spent some time at Harvard's Russian Research Center.

Not long ago, someone asked her where she'd like to live, and it appears there are only two places in the world that really turn her on. Her answer was "Cambridge and Moscow."

Mrs. MacMillan

in her lap, the accidental nature of Priscilla MacMillan's encounters is more apparent than real. She is resourceful as well as imaginative, and both qualities have given her a rather unique standing as a minor witness to a major event. She is probably one of no more than two or three people who knew both the late President Kennedy and his assassin.

NOT LONG OUT of Harvard Graduate School with a master's in Russian studies, Mrs. MacMillan got a job in 1959 as a researcher for the then Senator cow, an American friend casually mentioned "a boy named Oswald" was in town, trying desperately to defect.

Timidly, Mrs. MacMillan later reported in a Harper's article, she sought him out for an interview. For five hours, Lee Harvey Oswald talked evasively and bitterly about why he wanted to become a Soviet citizen. He had a need, she felt, "to stand out" . . . "to be marked as . . . different," and when the defection failed to prove his differentness, "he had to perform a yet more memorable and outrageous act."

The meeting led to the book Mrs. MacMillan has been writing on Oswald's widow. Marina Oswald agreed to see her because she had known Oswald and later consented to the months of interviews which form the basis for the unfinished volume.

MRS. MacMILLAN'S first encounter with Svetlana Stalina was the result of a habit of catching small, easily-overlooked details. On her first trip to Russia a dozen years ago, Mrs. MacMillan, an inveterate bulletin board reader, saw a notice outside a Moscow University building that Mme Stalina would be giving a series of literary lectures.

Realizing this was Stalin's daughter, the young tourist approached her for permission to attend the lectures. She found Svetlana, Mrs. MacMillan later told friends, "gracious but rather apprehensive." Permission was granted, but the next time she turned up at the entrance, there were guards waiting to tell her that only students were allowed in the building.

Originally a student of Soviet law, Mrs. MacMillan's interests later shifted to Soviet intellectual life, and in 1962 The Reporter magazine sent her on her third trip to write a series of pieces on the state of Russian culture.

SHE SPENT weeks talking to writers and artists, attending their lectures, visiting their homes and studios. On a Saturday night in Leningrad, as she was about to board a plane for the homeward journey the authorities confiscated 18 notebooks, informing her, she later told a friend, "that they contained a great deal of anti-Soviet propaganda, although how they could tell I can't imagine, since they hadn't read them.

She turned home numbed by the seizure and worried green about her Russian friends. Peo-

They have already started to work together at the Locust Valley estate of her father, Stuart H. Johnson. The third of four children, Mrs. MacMillan was brought up there and went to the private Greenvale School in nearby Roslyn.